

FS Direct

Direct Communication to Foreign Service Employees and Family Members

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FS Direct Subscriptions

Welcome to the April 2003 edition of *FS Direct*. To keep the publication user-friendly and simple, we have listed the articles in the sidebar to the left. Simply click on those items you are interested in reading. To subscribe to *FS Direct*, email flo@state.gov or visit the FLO area of the AAFSW web site at <http://www.aafsw.org> and click on FLO newsletters. *FS Direct* is also available on the FLO Internet web site at <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo>

From FLO Director Faye Barnes

On March 18, FLO marked 25 years of making a difference with about 200 guests in attendance. Secretary of State Colin L. Powell took time from his hectic schedule during a time of international crisis to address the assembled crowd. His remarks are on our Intranet web site at <http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/FLO/History/history.html> with introductory remarks by Ambassador Ruth A. Davis, Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Human Resources.

To commemorate the occasion, FLO published a special edition *FLO Focus*, chronicling 25 years of advocating for family member programs and services, and working within the Department of State to effect change. The *FLO Focus* can be read on the above web site. For a hardcopy (which includes the pictures!), contact flo@state.gov and we'll send you one. As you glance through the chronology, you will note that assisting families and posts in crisis began early in FLO's history. We learn from each experience and build on what we have found to be a best practice. At this writing there are more than 1,400 evacuees separated from loved ones, jobs and their belongings. Most of these evacuees are here because of the war in Iraq, but we are now also seeing evacuees who are returning from China and Vietnam, because of health concerns, due to the SARS outbreak there.

Click Your Way to More FLO Resources

FLO Homepage on the Intranet

<http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/flo/index.html>

FLO Homepage on the Internet

<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo>

FAMILY MEMBER EMPLOYMENT

- **(Updated Page)** More sites have been added to our **Popular International Job Search and Expat Web Sites** at <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrscs/pubs/4510.htm>. According to a [NY Times article](#), titled *In Job Search, Warm and Fuzzy Beats Online and All-Business* (February 2, 2003), only seven per cent of all jobs found are found through the Internet. The real value in using the Internet, for the majority of people, is as a research tool to get employment information -- to take a look and see what kind of jobs are out there, look at salaries, and to get ideas of occupations that might be of interest. We invite you to look at these sites as part of your research.
- **(New Page) Foreign Born Spouses** <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/19539.htm> (which addresses some Employment issues for foreign born spouses under Frequently Asked Questions)

SUPPORT SERVICES AND EVACUATIONS

- **(New Paper)** Employment Options for Evacuees <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrscs/pubs/16639.htm>
- **(New Page)** Foreign Born Spouses <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/19539.htm>
- **(New Page on the Intranet)** The Getting Married Checklist (for DOS employees who need to add a spouse to their orders) <http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/flo/worklife/gettingmarriedchecklist.html>
- **(Updated)** Welcome Back: Evacuation Information <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/2115.pdf>
- **(Updated)** Evacuation Questions and Answers <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrscs/pubs/10638.htm>
- **(Updated)** Information about the **Transitional Separate Maintenance Allowance** is available on the FLO evacuation web page. <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1991.htm>

EDUCATION AND YOUTH

- **(New Page)** Gifted Education <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/19359.htm>
- **(New Page)** Talking to Foreign Service Youth About War and Crisis <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c8894.htm>

- **(New Page)** FLO Offers Information to Local Area School Personnel about Evacuated Foreign Service Children <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c8128.htm>
- **(New Page)** Guidelines for United States Citizens Seeking to Bring a Nanny/household Worker to the United States while on Temporary Assignment in the United States <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrscs/pubs/17026.htm>
- **(Updated)** Home Schooling the Foreign Service Child <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/19290.htm>
- **(Updated)** Summer Camp Information
Intranet: <http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/flo/train/summercamps.html>
Internet: <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrscs/pubs/7142.htm>

NATURALIZATION

- **(Updated)** Naturalization under the Immigration and Nationality Act 319(b) <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrscs/pubs/2055.htm>
- **(New Page)** Foreign Born Spouses <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/19539.htm>

FLO Welcomes New Employment Specialist

The Family Liaison Office is pleased to welcome Jenneke Fijn van Draat who has joined the staff as an Employment Program Specialist. Jenneke brings 18 years of Foreign Service experience to her position, as well as the perspective of a foreign born spouse. Jenneke was introduced to Foreign Service life after marrying her husband while he was posted in her native country, The Netherlands, in 1985. She states, "My first 'foreign' post was Washington D.C. Here my learning curve on American life and culture quickly rose." Her overseas assignments included Niamey, Niger, Moscow, and Brussels, before returning to the Washington, DC area. While in Brussels, Jenneke served as one of the executive directors of FOCUS Career Services, organizing support, career and job search programs. She has also served as a Community Liaison Office coordinator. After working as a special events coordinator in the business world, Jenneke looks forward to working in the Family Liaison Office to support and work with FS family members on employment and career issues. Jenneke and her husband have two children.

SNAP Spouses Share Success Stories

Latest feedback from participants in FLO's Spouse Networking Assistance Program (SNAP) indicates several satisfied spouses who have successfully sought overseas employment outside of the U.S. mission. Networking leads to jobs and the success of the program clearly backs this up. A number of SNAP spouses were asked to comment on the effectiveness of the program, and here is a sampling of their responses:

A Spouse in Cairo:

"What did Cairo SNAP provide me - a full-time mom who has always worked part-time, but never wanted a 'career'? SNAP was my link to community contacts, full-time and part-time opportunities and ideas, lots of encouragement to look at my skills in different ways, resume assistance, and a positive nudge to stretch myself . . ."

A Spouse in Singapore:

"Thanks to (Local Employment Advisor) Greta Bergan's efforts, within only two weeks of our arrival, I was working in a very interesting job, which closely matched my qualification. When I asked for help in finding a position, Greta responded quickly and efficiently by matching my qualifications and needs with the various jobs she had in her portfolio. Without her assistance, this simply would not have happened and it has contributed significantly to our stay in Singapore!"

A Spouse in Warsaw:

"The SNAP program has helped my job search in Poland in several key ways:

First, the SNAP representative and I reviewed my resume and cover letter and made sure that they contained the information required in Poland (which is different than in the U.S.).

Second, the SNAP program representative helped me narrow my job search down from the huge list of companies that I found on line, from the American Chamber of Commerce, and from the embassy. I would have wasted my time preparing and sending my information to companies that just have two or three person field offices here, but the SNAP representative helped me target the key companies in my field.

Third, the SNAP representative has acted as a liaison between companies and myself, which has been a great help, particularly since Polish is not an easy language."

What is SNAP? The Spouse Networking Assistance Program helps family members of direct-hire U.S. Government employees assigned to a U.S. embassy or consulate to continue their professional careers by networking, building contacts, and assisting with culturally specific employment requirements. SNAP is a pilot program currently operating in nine countries: Mexico, Canada, United Kingdom, Belgium, Poland, Egypt, Singapore, Korea, and Japan. Plans are to expand the program to ten additional countries in 2003, funding permitting.

Want to learn more about SNAP? Go to <http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/flo/employment/SNAP.html> (Intranet), <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/9888.htm> (Internet) or contact the Family Liaison Office at flo@state.gov

Coming this Month ... A New Global Employment Newsletter

News for subscribers of FLO's *Global Employment Monthly*: This publication is expanding into a quarterly newsletter with the new name, ***Global Employment Connections!*** The newsletter will be a link to current information, resources, and job search strategies to help build a global career in a mobile lifestyle. It will also feature real-life success stories from spouses in the global workforce as well as employment advice from family members who want to share their lessons learned with others. You won't want to miss this new publication, filled with practical information to help you in your job search. If you have previously subscribed to *Global Employment Monthly*, you will automatically receive your email copy of the new newsletter in April. If you haven't subscribed, then it's time to get connected! Send your request to flo@state.gov today!

Naturalization

On March 1, Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) enforcement and service functions and responsibilities transitioned into the Department of Homeland Security under the name of the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS). No major changes are expected at this time with regard to the naturalization process. INS is no more. BCIS has taken its place!

To qualify for U.S. citizenship, applicants must demonstrate a basic understanding of English, including an ability to read, write, and speak the language. They must also be able to show that they know the fundamentals of U.S. history and government. The test given at the interview is currently being studied and a pilot program introduced to make the testing more uniform and standardized in different parts of the United States. For more information on Naturalization of DOS foreign born spouses, visit our web site at <http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/flo/policy/nature.html> (Intranet) or <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1966.htm> (Internet).

The Immediate Benefit Plan: Enrollment Season Opens May 1 and Extends through October 1, 2003

The death of a loved one can cause a significant financial hardship for families. Bills for travel, hotels, car rentals, funeral and burial may all come due after the employee's salary stops and before any pension or insurance kicks in. The Immediate Benefit Plan will provide for a \$15,000 payment to be sent to the designated beneficiary(ies) of an enrollee within just two work days of the employee's death to provide much needed cash. All U.S. citizen Department of State employees should review their personal contingency plans to determine if this new benefit, offered by the American Foreign Service Protective Association, should be part of their personal preparations. The cost of coverage is \$2 a pay period and must be made by payroll deduction – EXCEPT for employees on Leave Without Pay who may continue coverage by making quarterly, semi-annual or annual payments to AFSPA.

Employees enrolled before June 15, 2003 will be covered starting July 1, 2003. Employees enrolled after June 15 will be covered as of the first day of the month following receipt by AFSPA of their first \$2 payroll deduction.

For more information, please visit AFSPA's web site at <http://www.afspa.org>.

Talking to Foreign Service Youth About War and Crisis

The Family Liaison Office is aware that this is a difficult time not just for adults, but also for our children who struggle to understand world events. We have collected resources from various mental health professionals and launched a new web page to help parents talk to their children about war and crisis. This site also has links to news sources that are appropriate for children. The page is titled "Talking to Foreign Service Youth about War and Crisis" and can be found on the FLO web sties at:

Intranet:

<http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/FLO/worklife/TalkingtoFSYouthAboutWarandCrisis.html>

Internet: <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c8894.htm>.

The page provides some excellent suggestions for parents, teachers, and administrators, including articles to help adults cope with the situation as well.

Changes in Regulations

There is some good news on recent changes to regulations! Through a collaborative effort with the Family Liaison Office, the Office of Allowances, the Office of Overseas Schools, and the Office of the Legal Advisor, some important changes have recently been made to the DSSR Chapters 260 (Separate Maintenance Allowance), 270 (Education Allowance), 280 (Educational Travel), and 620 (Continuation of Salary and Allowance Payments). The amended regulations, effective March 23, 2003, should be online within the next week on the Office of Allowances web sites at <http://www.state.gov/m/a/als> (Internet) and <http://aoprals.a.state.gov> (Intranet). You can view the changes in their entirety. Here is a brief summary, but for precise interpretation, please refer back to the actual regulations.

- [264.3 – Transitional Separate Maintenance Allowance](#) - A transitional separate maintenance allowance (TSMA) is authorized to help defray costs so that a family may stay at the designated safehaven after an evacuation has been lifted in order to finish the school year if the children are in their second semester of school.
- [272.3 Selection of School](#) - One-time fees for school registration – there is a new formula for calculating these fees if you change schools mid-tour which allow for greater flexibility if the second school chosen is less expensive than the first. See examples online for clarification.
- [276.9\(d\) and \(e\) Supplementary Instruction](#) - Two new categories for supplemental education allowance of \$3000 have been added:
 1. **(d)** tutoring for a child who returns to post upon termination of an evacuation and needs help to catch up with peers.

2. **(e)** Gifted and talented education for those students who qualify.

- [277.3 Home Study/Private Instruction](#) – broader categories of allowable expenses include “textbooks and pertinent instructional materials”, internet connection fees related to home study, fees for participation in group sports events, recreational facilities, library services, etc. See allowances Q’s and A’s at <http://www.state.gov/m/a/als/c8406.htm>.
- [285.1 – Allowable expenses for Educational Travel](#) – students may store their personal effects at college instead of shipping them back to post for the summer as long as the cost of storage of personal effects does not exceed the cost of the UAB.
- [621.1 \(d\) - Continuation of Allowance and Salary Payments during an Evacuation \(Education Allowance\)](#) – if there is an internet classroom set up for evacuated students, the allowance will cover internet connectivity fees and costs and any school expenses related to the internet classroom.

We realize that there is still more work to be done, but we are very pleased that these changes have been approved and are ready to go in time to help some of our evacuees and other students with their immediate needs.

Foreign Service Youth Foundation Calendar of Events

The following Washington-based events are being publicized by the Foreign Service Youth Foundation.

April 26	IMAX Movie Event: <i>Pulse</i>
May 17	International Potluck BBQ
June 14	Baseball Game (Prince William County Potomac Cannons)
July 4	FSYF/AAFSW Independence Day Potluck/Picnic
July 29	Manassas Splashdown Waterpark
August 20	Six Flags America Adventure Theme Park
September 21	Welcome Back Family Picnic, Lubber Run Park

The Foreign Service Youth Foundation sponsors the AWAL (ages 13-19) and Globe Trotters (ages 9-12) youth development programs for Foreign Service kids who share the experience of living overseas. New members (whether you are returning from overseas, starting A-100 or have been in DC for awhile) are always welcome to join in the fun!

For information about the Foreign Service Youth Foundation, AWAL and Globe Trotters, contact the Foreign Service Youth Foundation at tel: (301) 404-6655, email: fsyf@fsyf.org, or through their web Site: <http://www.fsyf.org>.

Congressional Internships

Many members of Congress and congressional committees offer paid or unpaid internships at the high school and/or college level. The duration varies from summer only, to yearlong internships for college students on a part-time or full-time basis. The

U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate also sponsor a Page School, wherein 11th grade students study full-time in the morning, five days a week; and work as pages for either the House or the Senate in the afternoon, until the session adjourns.

Generally the internships, particularly for home offices in the members' districts (as opposed to committees) may tie in to residency in a particular congressional district or state, but the requirements depend on the office. Since all FSOs have home states/districts and their own member of Congress, your representative in Congress should be the first point of contact. There are many strengths and advantages that Foreign Service children could bring to a congressional office.

Currently, for example, Congressman Bill Thomas, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, is offering an internship for a student from his District. Senator Richard G. Lugar and Senator Chuck Hagel, both on the Foreign Relations Committee, have notices for interns on their home webpage. Also, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Minority Office has on its web site a general statement regarding internships.

If you are interested in either one of these internship opportunities, contact the congressional office directly following the instructions. Others interested in opportunities with home districts, or other committees, should write directly to the Committees/Member of the House/Senator.

The following Internet links should be of use:

<http://www.house.gov>

<http://www.senate.gov>

<http://www.thomas.loc.gov>

This information is provided to the Family Liaison Office as a service of the Bureau of Legislative Affairs.

AFSA Publishes New Book: *Inside a U.S. Embassy*

AFSA is pleased to announce the release of their new book, "Inside a U.S. Embassy: How the Foreign Service Works for America." This book provides an up-close and personal look into the lives of the employees who make up the U.S. Foreign Service. Ordering information is found at <http://www.afsa.org/inside> or by calling (847) 364-1222. For more information, email embassybook@afsa.org

State DMVs and U.S. Driver's Licenses

FLO has received requests from members of the Foreign Service community for assistance in renewing U.S. drivers licenses AFTER they have expired. There is nothing that FLO can do to help "renew" expired driver licenses. Experience has proven that it is very difficult to apply for a new U.S. driver's license from overseas. If your license expires, many states require that the applicant show up in person, and pass the road test, eye test and written exam.

FLO urges USG employees posted overseas to look at the expiration date on their U.S. drivers licenses and be mindful of the expiration date. Many states will allow you to renew a drivers license by mail or email, but in most states, expired licenses are not "renewable."

For information on DMV regulations by state, see http://nevadadmv.state.nv.us/50_state_dmv_list.html

AFSA M. Juanita Guess Award for CLO of the Year

AFSA officially announced the winner and runner-up for the 2003 M. Juanita Guess Award. **The winner is Joy Bacik, CLO Jakarta**, who has been working in FLO as an evacuated CLO for the past 5 months. (FLO notes that we have no influence over AFSA's choice of winners.) U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia Ralph Boyce nominated her for the award. **The runner-up for this year is Julie Konichek, CLO Cairo**, also nominated by her post management. FLO heartily congratulates these two outstanding CLOs for their consummate professionalism and commitment to serving their communities.

FLO also recognizes the outstanding performance of the following CLOs who were nominated for this prestigious award: Carol Bao - **CLO Dakar**, Dorothy Benson - **CLO Dhaka**, Fred Brems - **CLO La Paz**, Janet Ho-Powell - **CLO Taipei**, Yasmin Kahele and Mary Trego - **co-CLOs Athens**, Lilia Lally - **CLO Baku**, Amanda Neve - **CLO Harare**, Helen O'Leary - **CLO Bamako**, and Mette Beecroft - **former CLO**.

CLO Association Connects Former CLOs in Washington

The Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide (AAFSW) sponsor the CLO Association, an informative, professional and fun network group of current and ex Community Liaison Office coordinators. The purpose of the association is for all CLOs to stay connected with former colleagues, get current information regarding employment opportunities in the DC area or overseas, and know what is happening on important issues for leaving or returning CLOs and their families. The association also serves to keep members informed about education options, careers, professional growth, housing, life in D.C., and other challenges in Foreign Service life. The group meets four times per year. For more information, check the AAFSW web site at <http://www.aafsw.org>, tel: 202-362.6514, or email cloassociation@yahoo.com

AAFSW Bookfair 2003

The Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide (AAFSW) host an annual Bookfair in Washington, DC, at the Harry S Truman Building. Money raised from the bookfair helps with both the scholarships and keeping their organization in place and responsive to the needs of the overseas American community.

Donations are now being accepted for the bookfair. AAFSW makes the following recommendations:

Books: Please do not send American books to the Bookroom at the Department of State, with the possible exception of books about your post country that might not be readily available here in the United States.

Art: Those small craft items that are found everywhere in your host country are probably found very few places, if at all, back in the US. The better the craft item, the more they can be sold for, but don't overlook simple things that might catch the eye of a shopper at the Department. AAFSW loves to receive good baskets, nice fabrics, unique ethnic items, gifts moved from other posts that still haven't found a spot on the shelves, long-time family "treasures" you have grown tired of. Everything sent to AAFSW is tax deductible. Send a list with your donations and AAFSW will send you a copy of the list and a receipt that will indicate "as per attached list." The donor indicates the value. Send all items to Robin Jones, Bookroom, Room B816, HST Building, DOS.